

1. (Previously Amended) A method of assembling an above-ground pool on a surface, comprising:

providing an elastomeric pad;

placing said elastomeric pad on said surface, wherein said elastomeric pad creates a padded area on said surface, said elastomeric pad having a central region, a peripheral edge and a peripheral region proximate said peripheral edge, wherein said central region has a uniform thickness and said peripheral region increases in thickness as it approaches said peripheral edge;

erecting a continuous wall around said padded area; and

lining said continuous wall and said padded area with a pool liner, wherein said elastomeric pad is interposed between said pool liner and said surface wall.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said step of providing an elastomeric pad includes providing an elastomeric pad made from closed cell foam.

4. (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said step of providing an elastomeric pad includes providing an elastomeric pad that is at least two inches thick in all places.

5. (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said step of placing said elastomeric pad on said surface includes assembling a plurality of segments of said elastomeric pad to cover said padded area on said surface.

6. (Previously Amended) A method of preparing an area of ground surface on which will be constructed an above-ground pool that has a pool liner, said method comprising the steps of:

providing prefabricated padding in a plurality of segments;

assembling said plurality of segments of said prefabricated padding on the ground surface into a pad that covers said area on said ground surface, wherein said pad has a central region, a peripheral edge and a peripheral region proximate said peripheral edge, and wherein said central region has a uniform thickness and said peripheral region increases in thickness as it approaches said peripheral edge; and

constructing said above-ground pool over said prefabricated padding, wherein said prefabricated padding is interposed between said ground surface and said pool liner, thereby preventing said pool liner from directly contacting said ground surface at any point.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Original) The method according to Claim 6, wherein said segments of prefabricated padding are made from hydrophobic elastomeric material.

9. (Previously Amended) The method according to Claim 6, wherein said segments of prefabricated padding are at least two inches thick in all places.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Previously Amended) The method according to Claim ~~6~~ 13, wherein said elastomeric pad has a central region and a peripheral edge, and further including the step of folding said peripheral edge over toward said central region to double the thickness of said pad proximate said peripheral edge.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Cancelled)      A method of assembling an above-ground pool on a surface, comprising:

- providing an elastomeric pad, ~~wherein said elastomeric pad is made from a closed cell hydrophobic elastomeric material;~~
- placing said elastomeric pad ~~made from closed cell foam~~ on said surface, wherein said elastomeric pad creates a padded area on said surface;
- erecting a continuous wall around said padded area; and
- lining said continuous wall and said padded area with a pool liner, wherein said elastomeric pad is interposed between said pool liner and said surface wall.